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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

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TO: The Secretary

FROM: CA - Diego C. Asencio

SUBJECT: Disappearance of Maryknoll Priest, Father Roy Lawrence Bourgeois, Jr., in El Salvador

AmEmbassy San Salvador advised us yesterday that a 42 year old American Maryknoll priest, Roy Lawrence Bourgeois, Jr., is missing in El Salvador. Father Bourgeois traveled from Chicago to El Salvador via Mexico as a translator for a CBS news team. He arrived in San Salvador on Thursday, April 23, and met with Salvadoran Human Rights Commission members and others Friday and Saturday. Mid-morning on Sunday, April 26, he left the Hotel Camino Real, stating he had an upset stomach, was going for medicine and would return shortly. He has not been seen or heard of since.

Father Bourgeois was reportedly referred to CBS as a translator by the Committee of Solidarity with People of San Salvador (CISPIS) at Chicago, a group with strong Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) connections. Bourgeois and CBS newsman David Caravelo traveled first to Mexico City. They met with members of the Human Rights Commission in an effort to set up contacts with opposition forces in El Salvador. The Embassy believes it possible that Father Bourgeois did make contact with the FDR or other leftist forces in San Salvador on the morning of or the days prior to his disappearance.

The Embassy is monitoring the case closely. Salvadoran officials, including President Duarte, are well aware of this disappearance. We are in close touch with Maryknoll officials and with Father Bourgeois' family.

Father Bourgeois is the second American missing in El Salvador. John Sullivan, a free lance journalist, disappeared from the Sheraton Hotel under similar circumstances December 28, 1980.

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